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The
Beginnings
of Harvest
on the
China-Tibetan Border

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Kansu

Kansu is one of the provinces of China proper. It lies in the northwest corner of that country and adjoins the province of Amdo in northeast Tibet. The area of Kansu is 125,450 square miles. It is more than two and one half times the size of New York State. Its inhabitants are said to number 10,385,386. This gives a population of only 82 to the square mile. Its people occupy 78 walled cities (all of which are county seats), several hundred market towns and tens of thousands of villages. Probably not more than twenty per cent. of the people are found in the cities, the rest being scattered all over the country in villages and market towns.

Races and Religions

There are at least three distinct races in the province. They are the Chinese, Mongo-

lian and Turkish. The TURKS (locally called *Sala*) are found in the basin of the Yellow River, chiefly in the country of Hsün-hua in the western part of the province. They number about 100,000, and are followers of Mohammed.

The MONGOLS (locally called *Tong-hs'ang huei-huei*) are found mostly between the T'ao and the Ta rivers in the counties of Titao and Hochow. There are, at the least estimate, 200,000 of them. They also are Moslems. Other Mongols, few in number, live in scattered villages and are Buddhists in religion. They are locally known as the *t'u-ren*.

Among these two races *no* missionary work is being done.

Of CHINESE there are in this province upwards of 10,000,000. But two millions of them adhere fanatically to Mohammed and his religion. The others are followers of Confucius, Buddha and Lao-tsi.

Amdo, Tibet

The whole of northeast Tibet adjoining Kansu province is known generally as *Ching-hai* or *Ku-ku-nor*. (The first name is Chinese, the second, Mongolian, both meaning blue lake.) This great region includes the *Tsai-*

dom, *Kukunor proper* and *Upper Amdo*. The former two are peopled with Mongolians, the latter with Tibetans. These three districts approximate 750,000 in population. In these regions *no* missionary work has been done. The above named districts are ruled over by a Chinese general, but his rule is nominal only. Lower or Eastern Amdo is ruled by the Governor of Kansu. Its people are purely Tibetan, and they number approximately 250,000.

The vast majority of the people in these districts are devotees of Lamaism while a small number still adhere to the Bon faith, which is the ancient religion of Tibet.

First Work in Kansu

The first Protestant missionaries to enter the province were two C. I. M. pioneers. In the year 1876 they made a trip lasting several months during which they reached Lanchow, the capital. The next year, 1877, the first station was opened at Tsinchow, in the east of the province.

In 1894 some brethren of the Scandinavian Alliance began work in Ping-liang, a large city in the east of Kansu.

From these beginnings the work of these societies extended to various places in the

province and continues to the present time under the blessing of God.

Beginning of Alliance Work

In April, 1895, the first Alliance missionaries reached Taochow, Old City, on the Tibetan border. Every year thereafter more missionaries followed. Extensive itinerating was carried on by them for five years. During this period three stations were opened, viz., Taochow Old City, Minchow and Paougan. The latter, in the heart of the Tibetan tribe of Rekong, after being held for 18 months, was destroyed by a Tibetan mob, the missionaries barely escaping with their lives. Several attempts were made at two other points in Lower Amdo—La-brang and Hehts'o,—but persistent and violent opposition compelled us to retire to Taochow Old City, the base of all our Tibetan work.

In 1900 all missionaries were recalled on account of the Boxer outbreak. When the missionaries started for the coast they bade farewell to a weeping and sorrowful handful of the first-fruits from that corner of the great harvest field. Thus ended the first stage of missionary work on the Kansu-Tibetan border.

Extension

In the summer of 1902 work was resumed. Other stations were opened from time to time, among the more important of which are the walled cities of Taochow New City, Titao, Chone, Hochow and Kongchang. Besides these there are other six points occupied. Thus we hold at present thirteen stations and out-stations. At eleven of them either missionaries or evangelists are permanently located, the remaining two places being visited periodically. Ten of these stations are situated among the Chinese, and three—Chone, Le Lacheur Memorial and Hsien-ti—on the border line among the Tibetans.

The Missionary Force

From the beginning to the present time there have been sent out to this field thirty-eight missionaries. Of these, five have gone "to be with Christ," six have resigned from our Society, one was retired, three were transferred to Central China, while twenty-three remain in connection with this field.

Character of Work

The work of our missionaries is chiefly evangelistic and pastoral. They lead and

supervise the work of native evangelists on our stations and outstations. This involves a good deal of traveling. They have also to plan and often lead preaching campaigns at fairs and among the villages. They set the evangelist an example in the street chapels and at market towns. They plan tours for the selling of Scriptures, oversee the work and keep the accounts of the colporteurs. They are called upon to deal with difficulties arising in the work, to arbitrate between the heathen and Christians and to settle knotty problems of church discipline and Christian practice. Besides preaching at the regular Sunday services, they hold special evangelistic meetings on their stations for the unsaved and conventions for the instruction and edification of believers. They conduct Sunday Schools for the systematic study of the Word, and superintend day schools for the education of the children of our Christian community. And, besides all this, they have the general oversight and care of a mission station with its many and varied calls upon their time, strength and patience. In short, the missionary's life is a life lived in a very practical way for "others."

Our lady missionaries give much of their

time to the day and Sunday Schools above mentioned. They also do all the work there is done among women. This distinctive work consists in visiting the women in their homes, receiving them when they call at the mission station, touring in the villages to preach to the women, and holding special "women's meetings" and reading classes for their salvation and instruction. Incidentally, our ladies look after the sick, both among Christian and heathen friends, advise the women when in difficulty, cheer them when discouraged, comfort them when in sorrow and in all things show them an example of Christian womanhood. Thank God for the noble Christian women by whose lives Christ is being magnified and glorified among the heathen.

Results to end of 1917.

From the beginning, 616 converts have been baptized. Of these, nearly thirty have gone to be with the Lord, a few have been transferred to other Missions, about eighty have been excommunicated and 475 remain in church fellowship. These Christians are organized in eight congregations, the largest of which has a membership of 105, the smallest, of fifteen. Besides these members, there are enrolled in

inquirers' classes 296 converts under instruction preparatory to baptism. We never baptize infants, and only those who have publicly confessed Christ as their Saviour are enrolled as inquirers.

Five day schools and one boarding school have sprung up to take care of the children of native Christians. They have an enrollment of eighty-four.

A Bible Training School came into existence to meet the need of more thorough Bible instruction for those whom, we believe, God is calling to preach the gospel. Its full course covers three years and its modified course two years. From among its graduates there now assist us in the Lord's service fifteen evangelists. At present, eleven men are enrolled as students, all of whom expect to be either evangelists or pastors.

Our six school teachers are also from among the converts of our own Mission and are men of sterling Christian character and good influence for Christ. As a result, more than half of the scholars are Christians.

About a dozen Christian native women are in course of preparation for Biblewomen's work. Within two years we hope to have several Biblewomen fully employed.

In the matter of self-support, the churches are making headway, and we are hoping that in a few years all local congregations will have become entirely self-supporting. However, in this as in self-propagation there remains much to be desired.

Present Needs

We need young men for purely Tibetan work. They must be strong, able to put up with any circumstances, eat any kind of food and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Our field needs money for a Bible School building for women, two modest dwelling houses for missionaries, the rebuilding of a chapel, and for the extension of the old Tibetan station equipment at Taochow Old City.

We need a great increase in our staff of native workers, that the market towns and villages may be thoroughly evangelized.

The whole field needs a fresh influx of divine life through the Holy Spirit, that the Word of the Lord may spread more rapidly, more simply and more effectively throughout that whole region.

Outlook and Opportunities

Of that portion of Kansu allotted to our

Society for evangelization there are still seven walled cities and forty market towns without any witness for Christ. We are hoping and praying for missionaries to be sent to each of the walled cities and for native evangelists to be placed in these market towns. Here are further opportunities for our people to help in this last great campaign before the Lord comes. May His Spirit *stir us to further efforts* to tell of Jesus and His salvation until the last city, the last town, the last village shall have had a witness given. And THEN shall the end (of the age) come.

Just a word more. Let us not forget Amdo and its many tribes and clans who have never seen, never heard, a missionary. We *cannot give up* the hope of fully evangelizing this *last corner* of our Kansu-Tibetan field. Let us *continue* to pray and believe for it. And when its doors are fully open, *it will not take long* to tell the story to its people. How one's heart burns with the desire to see all the *last* tribes and peoples of earth evangelized!

Let those who have received the fulness of the Spirit *understand* that *they are responsible* for the sending of the gospel to all the neglected spots of earth. If your fulness of blessing *ends in yourself, your Mission, or Church,*

or in *anything* short of sending salvation to the *uttermost* parts of the earth you have failed to understand your Lord's commission. If we are to please the Lord Jesus, we *must* send or carry His name to those who never heard it, until *all* shall have heard.

When He comes, may He find us doing His will in this respect, *faithfully* and *wholeheartedly*. Amen!



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